

EDITORIAL.

WITH THIS NUMBER the BOTANICAL GAZETTE passes into the possession of the University of Chicago. The only change that will be apparent to readers will come from the much larger opportunity of serving botany, for the same editors will remain in charge, and the general purpose of the journal will continue to be the same. The establishment of a Department of Botany, and the appointment of the senior editor as head professor, justifies the University of Chicago in assuming financial responsibility for the publication of the GAZETTE, which has been brought to its present standing by private enterprise. That this has been possible demonstrates its adaptation to the needs of American botanists, as well as their cordial appreciation. Now that it is about to enter upon a period of strong financial support it expects to meet these needs in the fullest possible way, and more abundantly deserve the good-will of its readers.

It should be clearly understood that the GAZETTE is to be even more freely open to the botanists of the world than it has been in the past. It is not to be the organ of the botanical department of any university, but it belongs to all botanists everywhere. Its relation to the University of Chicago is simply to bring it that permanence and possibility of development which the present condition of botanical science demands.

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THE FIRST paper in the last number of the *Minnesota Botanical Studies* might furnish an excellent text for a homily upon the abuse of the footnote. On one page, containing less than 300 words, there are no less than twenty footnotes! When the author says of *Cypripedium*, "The genus is represented in Russia⁴⁴, Germany⁴⁵ and other portions of Europe,"⁴⁶ she feels impelled to cite Ledebour and the *Bot. Jahresberichte* to establish these well-known facts. It would be almost as appropriate to cite the *Century* or *Standard* dictionaries as authority for the very words of the sentence. Such a volume of unnecessary references suggests too much the strutting turkey with feathers erected to produce an effect of size and weight beyond his real substance.

FOR THE LAST paper entitled "A study of some Minnesota Myceto-
zoa," Mr. Sheldon deserves severe censure. We have known Mr. Shel-
don heretofore as a student of the very difficult genus *Astragalus*, in
which his work has received sharp criticism, some undeserved and some
doubtless deserved. His appearance as a reviser of genera in the far
more obscure Mycetozoa is therefore a great surprise. It is quite im-
possible to believe that a student of as few years standing as the author
of this paper can be entitled to speak upon both *Astragali* and Myce-
tozoa. Had Mr. Sheldon confined his publication to a list of Minne-
sota Mycetozoa, under names accepted by any monograph, he would
have done a real service. But when in a list of forty-two species he
proposes twenty-five new names (with long lists of synonyms in which
we can have no confidence), he not only stultifies himself but does ir-
reparable harm. The case, however, is even worse. Not content with
dumping about the Minnesota species the rubbish of worthless names
constructed from book synonymy, Mr. Sheldon proceeds to "indicate"
the nomenclature of sixty-odd species with which he had no immedi-
ate concern. It is difficult to refrain from imputing unworthy motives
in censuring such a flagrant abuse of liberty of publication.

While Mr. Sheldon is the chief sinner, we cannot but feel that the
editor of the *Minnesota Botanical Studies* by permitting the publica-
tion of this paper, has, not only done harm to the science of taxonomy,
but has put into the hands of conservatives in nomenclature a keen
weapon which they will not hesitate to use against the advocates of
reasonable reforms.